

4 with some authority. My father owned and
5 operated an AM-FM station in Charleston, West
6 Virginia. I grew up in the business. I
7 obtained my First-Class license, became a
8 chief engineer at an AM-FM station.

9 We operate in a community way through a
10 diversity of programming addressing all types
11 of community needs. After all, it was the
12 Commission who mandated this through license
13 renewal.

14 We were only the caretakers of these
15 frequencies. We had to prove ourselves at
16 every license renewal. Never feared the FCC
17 but had great respect, because I thought
18 you-all guarded the air space for these
19 listeners.

20 Now I feel like I've got to convince you
21 that you're on our side, that you're not on
22 the side of large corporate ownership. I
23 don't have time to go into the exhibit that I
24 brought.

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25 But this is the manual, written in the

1 1950s, the duties of a station, how it has to
2 meet the community's needs. Stated (sic) into
3 the story when my father retired, he sold the
4 stations. A large group bought them, took the
5 AM dark -- simply brought in a satellite dish,
6 brought in a feed for the FM. Charleston had
7 no more rich programming. Thank you.

8 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

9 would the following people come down.
 10 Joseph Valdez, Ken Scharatt, Leonard Schmiede,
 11 Rhone Frazier, James Miller, Jean Etsinger,
 12 Joan -- Jason Polhemus, Lisa Livinggood, Frank
 13 Orlando.

14 Mark Skogman.

15 MR. SKOGMAN: You want me to speak?

16 MR. SIGALOS: Yes.

17 MR. SKOGMAN: Oh, sorry.

18 Commissioners of the Federal
 19 Communications Commission, thank you for
 20 coming to Tampa Bay.

21 My name is Mark Skogman. I'm allowed to
 22 speak with you. You're spending a lot of
 23 time. I'm very concerned about the
 24 developments of the last years in the media in
 25 the United States.

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1 Media consolidation has been a disaster
 2 for the country, generally, and local
 3 communities specifically. I'm very concerned
 4 and angered by -- media consolidation is a
 5 terrible thing that's -- in local content,
 6 local access, public-affairs programming and
 7 in this division of fact that are important to
 8 the public, including the truth about 9/11.

9 What is the Federal Communications
 10 Commission thinking when they allow a company
 11 like Clear Channel to own over 1200 radio
 12 stations?

13 What affect has this on local
 14 programming? It's apparently eliminated it.

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15 Think of the situations that've happened where
16 local governments have had important emergency
17 information for the community and could not
18 get an employee on the telephone or at the
19 door to -- (Inaudible) -- and announcement to
20 be made on the station.

21 The radio frequencies the big stations
22 use are public property, my property. And
23 they are not being made or being used in a way
24 I consider close to appropriate.

367 25 Imagine the founders of our country in

1 the 1700's allowing one company to own 1200
2 printing presses, what would this have -- what
3 effect would this have on our functioning
4 democracy at the beginning, as we know it did.

5 The physical means of information
6 dissemination cannot be controlled in this
7 way. Let's call media consolidation what it
8 is. This is government-enabled large media
9 corporation corporatism.

10 Let us remember the famous quote from
11 Benito Mussolini. When asked for the
12 definition of fascism, he said that a better
13 word for it was corporatism.

14 Corporatism has to stop and stop now, or
15 we'll suffer further serious negative damage
16 on our democracy and the world. Thank you.

17 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

18 Joseph Valdez.

19 MR. VALDEZ: Yes. Hello. You know, I

20 heard some people here talk about the race,
21 the Hispanic person, this and that. But I
22 think it's even more important than race.
23 I'm -- I'm going to just -- (Inaudible) --
24 going to use the race card.

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25 So I'm just going to tell you, I'm a

1 Cuban-American. Okay. I came here when I was
2 six years old. My father and my mom came here
3 to leave a dictatorship. Because they
4 controlled the airwaves, they controlled
5 everything.

6 And it's sad to say it, it's very sad for
7 me to be here tonight to try to convince this
8 group of people -- except for the exception of
9 Mr. Copps, I saw you on PBS with Bill
10 Moyers -- that we have to try to state and
11 prove to you how big media and what they're
12 doing and the fact that they want to buy the
13 corporate -- corporations are buying more and
14 big, big media, when in reality we should be
15 having a hearing on how to roll back big
16 media. (Applause.) Because they have not
17 done their job.

18 Okay. And you people up there are
19 supposed to represent me. I'm not a
20 professor. I am not a media expert. I'm
21 nothing. I'm just a citizen. Okay. And it's
22 your responsibility to stand up for me
23 because, according to the constitution, the
24 citizens of the United States own the
25 airwaves.

1 I don't have anyone to represent me. You
2 do. I'll just give you a quick scenario. And
3 you guys know about this, just because you're
4 in the business. I'm a portrait photographer.
5 I don't need to tell you about your business.

6 But -- (Inaudible) -- did a study leading
7 up prior to the Iraq War. That's the accuracy
8 and the democracy. And you know what, on PBS,
9 ABC, CBS, they did almost 500 interviews, 500
10 broadcasts, and --

11 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you very much.

12 MR. VALDEZ: -- you know what -- I'm not
13 done yet. And you know what, three were for
14 peace, three out of almost 500. I'm here to
15 get --

16 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you very much.

17 MR. VALDEZ: I want -- I want to get both
18 sides of the story.

19 MR. SIGALOS: -- minutes.

20 MR. VALDEZ: Excuse me. I want --

21 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you very much.

22 MR. VALDEZ: Well, wait a minute. I'm
23 here to give both sides of the story. Okay.
24 I want to be -- I want the airwaves -- and I
25 want --

1 MR. SIGALOS: -- give you -- you time is

2 --

3 MR. VALDEZ: I want the television
4 stations to show -- to show me both sides so

5 that I can make an intelligent decision. I
6 don't want corporate American showing me one
7 side-

8 MR. SIGALOS: -- Mr. Valdez --

9 MR. VALDEZ -- of the issue.

10 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

11 MR. VALDEZ: You'RE welcome.

12 MR. SIGALOS: Ken Scharatt.

13 MR. SCHARATT: I'm here this evening to
14 state my concerns with your commission and
15 your inability to guide and direct and give us
16 the airwaves that we deserve, the media that
17 we deserve, the reporting that we deserve in a
18 free democracy.

19 You're not doing your job. And the only
20 way I can see where this is going to end is
21 that we're going to have to go, and there's
22 going to have to be a huge litigation done
23 against this organization, because you're not
24 doing your job. You've sold out. You've sold
25 your souls.

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1 A VOICE: -- class action suit.

2 MR. SCHARATT: A class action suit is
3 what is needed in this country to take and
4 bring back the power to the people. Thank
5 you. (Applause.)

6 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

7 Leonard Schmiede.

8 MR. SCHMIEGE: Schmiede.

9 Hello. Good evening. My name's Leonard
10 Schmiede. I was forced to become an

11 independent journalist, video journalist.
 12 when I found that the mainstream press refused
 13 to provide adequate coverage, I started
 14 investigating election fraud and voting
 15 machines that could have become manipulated,
 16 because they build -- my company builds
 17 computer control systems with touch screens
 18 (sic.)

19 Do not trust your vote to an electronic
 20 voting machine. (Applause.) I covered with
 21 the -- (Inaudible) -- District 13 race with a
 22 GE. We broke down their videotaping, because
 23 the news only shows up for two seconds, gets
 24 the bite it needs.

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25 But we drew up a full story. Go to

1 shadowvote.org. There's two 30-minute videos
 2 on there that show you exactly what a
 3 catastrophe our elections processes are

4 (Applause.)

5 But the media doesn't want you to know
 6 that. They want the status quo, the illusion
 7 that is everything is going just fine. They
 8 never do an investigation.

9 I pulled a bag of shredded ballots out of
 10 the dumpster behind Deborah Clark's office,
 11 the supervisor of elections in Pinellas
 12 County. And I called the St. Petersburg
 13 Times, and I said, "I got this bag of shredded
 14 ballots here. You don't want to come check it
 15 out."

16 You know what they said, "we're not going
17 on a witch hunt for Deborah Clark."

18 I said, "who said anything about a witch
19 hunt. I thought you were just going to try to
20 find out what was the cause of the shredded
21 ballots."

22 Now, it turns out those shredded ballots
23 were duplicates, illegally disposed of, but
24 not quite as bad as -- as who's -- (Inaudible)
25 -- the original vote.

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1 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

2 MR. SCHMIEGE: Listen to Democracy Now if
3 you want to get the truth about what's
4 happening in this country. (Applause.) Thank
5 you.

6 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

7 Rhone Frazer.

8 (No audible response.)

9 MR. SIGALOS: James Miller.

10 MR. MILLER: Good evening. You've heard
11 an expression of "Thanks for being here." And
12 I think you should thank us for what you have
13 heard today. That should be your gratitude
14 that you ought to express when you go back to
15 Washington.

16 I'm a board member of an organization
17 called the Florida Coalition for Peace and
18 Justice. (Applause.) It's a mission -- we
19 have a mission to transform this culture of
20 militarism, greed, violence, materialism to
21 one of equality, mutual responsibility and

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22 bring it back to democratic principles.

23 I was hearing the questions (sic.) And
24 that's it. What do you think accounts for the
25 great draw of John Stewart in the evening?

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1 were the early fathers of this country,
2 Ben Franklin and others who risked the
3 printing of leaflets opposing, would they be
4 proud or what you do and your work?

5 Are you proud of what your children,
6 maybe your parents, your grandparents, see and
7 hear?

8 Do you think there's any direct
9 connection between the rush to media
10 consolidation and a dumbing-down of America?

11 And, finally, you're either part of the
12 solution or you are part of the problem.

13 Thank you. (Applause.)

14 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

15 Jean Etsinger.

16 MS. ETSINGERER: You got it right. Thank
17 you.

18 I'm a career journalist and newspaper
19 editor. I've also been a volunteer for many
20 not-for-profits raising funds for friends. I
21 found it amazing we had so many testimonials
22 earlier today from such agencies lauding area
23 media outlets for their support; however,
24 although this may sound cruel, a news media
25 ought not to be judged in the community it

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1 serves, by the fundraisers it sponsors or by
2 its collection of Christmas Toys for Tots or
3 clothing for hurricane victims. And I speak
4 as both a hurricane victim and a volunteer.
5 Because this is not the mandate of the news
6 media.

7 The mandate in a democracy, such as ours,
8 is to provide information to the public,
9 collectively, so that people, individually,
10 can make informed decisions about everything
11 that affects their lives.

12 We are told that newspapers are dying.
13 We have heard here today the argument that
14 convergence is critical. We're keeping our
15 newspapers on artificial life support.

16 But the airwaves are a special case, a
17 public domain. My view is that the future of
18 newspapers will ride on better local community
19 coverage and local community access. Get back
20 to the broadcast.

21 On the island of St. Thomas, where I
22 lived before I moved to Sarasota, there's a
23 population of 50,000 people. There are two
24 radio stations that have full-time
25 professional news staffs. It's amazing.

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1 In the St. Thomas -- in the Sarasota
2 metro area of a half a million people, guess
3 what, there are two stations with news
4 departments, and one of them is paid, the
5 other's volunteers.

6 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.
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7 MS. ETSINGER: Thank you.

8 Jason Polhemus.

9 (No audible response.)

10 MR. SIGALOS: Lisa Livinggood.

11 MS. LIVINGOOD: I apologize, 'cause I
12 won't -- probably won't be as eloquent as I
13 would like to be. I've very tired today and
14 tonight (sic.)

15 My background, I graduated, PBA (sic)
16 with a degree in economics. And I graduated
17 from American University with a MIS in
18 international service. I've spent six years
19 in radio and television and eleven years in
20 the United States military.

21 The first three things that I want to ask
22 you is 1) to reject the consolidation of
23 media, 2) to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine,
24 and 3) to promote increase local and
25 independent media.

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1 But I ask you this for different reasons
2 than those that were stated here tonight. The
3 reasons I ask you for this is because you have
4 the opportunity to impact not only the freedom
5 of speech in the United States, but also for
6 the future of global media.

7 The decisions that you make impact the
8 likelihood that the United States will
9 continue to be hated in other countries. What
10 most people don't recognize is that our media
11 is read and understood.

12 Fox News is broadcast all over the Middle
13 East. And when a reverend says that Muslims
14 are satanists and that the reason that the
15 earthquake hit Pakistan and 30 million people
16 died is because they are satanic. But that
17 directly impacts back on our country in the
18 United States.

19 So the Fairness Doctrine is critical.
20 And it is your responsibility to look after to
21 not only the United States' welfare, the
22 Constitution but the -- (Inaudible) -- as
23 well. And I ask you to uphold your
24 responsibility. Thank you very much.

25 (Applause.)

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1 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

2 Would the following five people and the
3 following final people come to the mike.
4 Michelle Kenoyer, Jarvis El-Amin, Hakim Aquil,
5 Ahmed Bedier, Barbara Fite.

6 And right now if Frank Orlando would come
7 forward.

8 MR. ORLANDO: Hello. My name is Frank
9 Orlando. And my job doesn't provide me with
10 the abilities to afford cable or satellite
11 radio.

12 My job does provide with authority to
13 spend 50 hours listening to music and seeing
14 Tampa and the Orlando music markets. And when
15 the -- when Clear Channel incorporated eight
16 radio stations into one building, you could
17 dramatically see the level of programming

18 significantly dropped.

19 And you -- examples of news broadcasts
20 from one radio station being combined and
21 that, like, when I went over to drive over to
22 Orlando, which is a completely different
23 market, the rock station there and the rock
24 station in Tampa was doing the same morning
25 program.

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1 And the DJ -- we used to have a local
2 Tampa DJ, and they would go to different night
3 spots, and they make themselves publicly
4 (sic), and they communicated with local
5 musicians. And now with these syndications,
6 it makes it difficult for a particular DJ to
7 put his energy and his staff into that
8 community.

9 So that's just one of my personal
10 concerns about consolidation. And I have
11 more, but that's -- that's all. I'll leave it
12 at that.

13 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

14 Michelle Kenoyer.

15 MS. KENOYER: Thank you, Commissioners,
16 for staying late to hear all of us. While I'm
17 now a Tampa area resident, I'm not originally
18 from Florida. And I've previously lived in
19 diverse regions of the U.S., both culturally
20 and politically.

21 The mainstream media outlets in
22 Tampa-St. Pete, however, by-and-large do not

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23 reflect, cater to or serve the needs and
24 interests of the Tampa Bay Area's diverse
25 citizenry; in fact, most of the

1 Tampa-St. Pete's radio and TV networks present
2 news and opinions with a decidedly right-wing
3 bias, masquerading as balance and knowledge of
4 power. I witnessed close family members alter
5 their opinions of government, war and our
6 fellow Americans as a result of what they have
7 seen on O'Reilly or heard on Sean Hannity's
8 show.

9 As a taxpaying homeowner in the Tampa Bay
10 Area, I find it unsettling that large
11 conglomerates can have so much impact over
12 what we listen to and watch and what we make
13 of this information.

14 Consolidated, unregulated media ownership
15 is harmful in a democracy, if this information
16 is controlled and contrived by an elite few.
17 Because what we see and hear over our public
18 airwaves -- airwaves can influence elections,
19 overturn laws, threaten civil rights and start
20 wars.

21 I implore the Commission to do what it
22 can to reverse the negative impact of media
23 consolidation and restore openness to our
24 once-free airwaves that belong to all of us.
25 Thank you. (Applause.)

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1 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.
2 Jarvis El-Amin.

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3 (No audible response.)

4 MR. SIGALOS: Hakim Aquil.

5 (No audible response.)

6 MR. SIGALOS: Ahmed Bedier.

7 MR. BEDIER: Good evening. My name's
8 Ahmed Bedier. I'm the executive director of
9 the Council on America-Islamic Relations, a
10 Muslim civil rights group.

11 And my -- (Inaudible) -- is to help us
12 stop big media from doing three things:
13 Disseminating trash over our airwaves,
14 disseminating political propaganda and hate
15 speech.

16 And as for most of us living in this
17 country, the lies and hate speech directed at
18 our community post 9/11 is unacceptable. Some
19 have compared to it Nazi propaganda against
20 Jews during World War II, where there were
21 more and more voices over the airwaves,
22 conservative right-wingers are constantly
23 attacking Muslims, inciting hatred against our
24 community and putting the lives of other
25 Americans that just happen to be practicing a

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1 different faith in jeopardy, people like Neal
2 Boortz saying that Islam is a cancel, and it
3 needs to be uprooted; people like Glenn Beck
4 who said that Muslims will see the west
5 through razor wires, meaning -- in internment
6 camps of Muslims and then had the audacity to
7 use the airwaves to question the loyalty of

8 the first Muslim elected to Congress,
9 questioning him, "Prove to me, sir, you don't
10 work for the enemy."

11 That's ridiculous. That's unacceptable.
12 I can't even turn on the radio or turn on the
13 television when my kids are up, my two
14 children, because I'm afraid that they'll feel
15 like victims all their lives.

16 And every time they turn on the
17 television, they hear that Islams, Muslims are
18 terrorists, Muslims are violent, that Islam is
19 inherently violent. That's unacceptable.
20 It's got to stop.

21 And when we try to reach out, we do -- we
22 only find obstacles. It's your job to defend
23 this Constitution and the airwaves. Help us
24 do that. Thank you.

383 25 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

1 Barbara Fite.

2 (No audible response.)

3 MR. SIGALOS: Barbara Fite.

4 (No audible response.)

5 MR. SIGALOS: Ladies and gentlemen, this
6 concludes the Commission's fourth hearing on
7 media ownership.

8 On behalf of the Federal Communications
9 Commission, I would like to thank so very much
10 for your attendance and for your
11 participation.

12 Good night.

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* * * * *

(WHEREUPON, at 11:33 p.m., the
proceedings were adjourned.)

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COURT REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF FLORIDA :
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH :

I, ELIDA T. HAGER, Registered

Professional Reporter and Notary Public in and for
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the hearing was recorded in Stenotypy by me and
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I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither an
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cause nor a relative or employee of any attorney or
party connected with this litigation and that I
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WITNESS WHEREOF my hand and seal this
22nd of May 2007, at Tampa, Hillsborough County,

19 Florida.

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